February 29, 1972

Mr. Irv Drasnin
CBS-TV
New York, New York

Dear Irv:

Sorry to have delayed in corresponding regarding reactions to your "China" program. For a while, I thought you would be pre-empted by R.N.'s landing, but fortunately we read the Saturday TV column which indicated that your program would begin 1/2 hour earlier (5:30 - 6:30 P.S.T.).

On the whole, I think it was excellent. Even those of us who revel in trivia enjoyed the memories of the comics and movie serials etc. The film clips were chosen well both in depicting historical and "up-to-date" glimpses of past and present prejudices and misconceptions. The whole concept was an excellent overture to actually seeing present-day China and hearing the newscasters describing same.

If one must find fault, and believe me it is not my intention to belittle, Charles Kuralt seemed to be "kinescoped". By this, I mean the quality of the film was poor. His narration was superb, as usual. One can assume that "the message is the medium" except that this would render your writing to be of secondary importance. This is far from the case.

While I am sure that all your past studies and educational background did not meet fruition in this production, it is our feeling that you can be justly proud.

I hope that with the new "crack" in the Chinese curtain (does this mean one mustslide in sideways?), you may find yourself eating thousand-day eggs with chopped herring in the Ming Tombs in the very near future.

Looking forward to hearing from you or seeing you soon.

Regards,

P.S. Don't understand the last part of your letter regarding leaving C.B.S. (?) or just getting out for the time being.

CBS NEWS
A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Mr. Don Shulman
8421 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 202
Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211

Dear Don:

I've just returned from one of my greatest triumphs: two weeks in Mexico and not one instant of diarrhea. Take that Montezuma!

I'm pleased by your reaction to the China broadcast, which generally has met with a most gratifying response. Your reference to the "quality" of the Kuralt on-camera pieces reminds me of the story of the producer who, when presented with film of the "second coming", flatly refused to put it on the air because it was scratched! Since Kuralt was filmed in a studio under controlled conditions, the film should have been perfect. That it wasn't is a tribute to the cameramen and the fact that I didn't have time to re-shoot it. But I no longer worry about such things. We'd agree that what is important is what a documentary says and what it shows in support of what it has to say. I'm particularly pleased at your acknowledgement of the writing.

Indeed, I would like to film my next documentary in China. I hope the networks learned their lesson (or at least that CBS did) from coverage of the Nixon trip. It was awful, mostly because they sent the wrong people to do it. Anyway, I'm about over that outrage and beginning to think about what subject I'd like to spend the next few months on (and reach some conclusions of my own before CBS NEWS reaches its own conclusions).

My reference to getting away from here was intended to mean only my need of a change of scenery and a vacation; though I'm not convinced I want to spend the rest of my days with the corporation, either.

Meanwhile, Louisville and, hopefully, North Carolina loom on the horizon. To think that I grew up hating the New York Yankees because they never lost!!

My love to Dee and Rube and Tommie. I hope and trust that all is well.

As always,

March 23, 1972

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

BOULDER, COLORADO 80302

February 20, 1972

CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES

(303) 443-2211
Ext. 8856
6640

Mr. Irv Drasnin
CBS News
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear Irv:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter of February 9. I had shared your intentions of following up our meeting at The Broadmoor, but had been similarly inundated with administrative plus teaching tasks.

I waited to respond until I had seen your "Misunderstanding China" today, with a view to including my general impressions, if they happened to be favorable. They are; so I needn't resort to East Asian polite silence on the matter. In all honesty, I think your program was one of the best film presentations(if not the best) on China that I have ever seen. It started where I think we need to start--right at the attitudes; and it very deftly combines commentary with images and (almost sadistically, but with pedagogical power) juxtaposes images. I'm sure you will receive a variety of reviews; I thought you wouldn't mind a comment from a fellow who makes his living trying to inculcate a bit of understanding about East Asia.

If possible, I would like to try to purchase a copy of the film for our audio-visual dept. so that it will be on hand for course use and over campus showings. If this does not seem possible, of course I will want information on where to go in order to rent a copy. Information on these matters will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lawrence W. Beer
Director

McGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL

Center for East Asian Studies

February 24, 1972

Mr. Irv Drasnin
Producer,
CBS News
524 West 57 St.
New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear Mr. Drasnin:

Many thanks for your letter of February 11.

Unfortunately, because I was to be on CBS myself that evening, I was only able to catch part of your documentary "Misunderstanding China" before leaving the hotel. What I saw of it was good, and I was impressed by the number of excellent historical clips you managed to collect. Congratulations.

Do you think it would be possible for me to borrow a copy of the documentary? I should like to show it to some students and faculty here and in the process see it myself in its entirety, whereupon I can give you a more detailed comment as you requested.

I too hope that we will have an opportunity to meet again and discuss matters of common interest.

Sincerely,

Paul T.K. Lin
Director

PTKL/el

:enter for East Asian Studies
McGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL 110, QUEBEC
CANADA

35W45

Mr. Irv Drasnin
Producer,
CBS News
524 West 57th St.
New York N.Y. 10019
USA

CBS NEWS
A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Dear Professor Lin:

Thank you for your letter and for your generous preliminary remarks regarding the documentary "Misunderstanding China."

The response so far has been most gratifying and I would be most pleased for you and your colleagues at McGill to see it in its entirety.

I'm confident I can arrange for the loan of a print , but it will probably be a couple of weeks before they are available. By the time I return from a vacation, about March 20, I should be able to lay my hands on one and I will send it to you.

I will be most interested and grateful for your observations and those of your colleagues who may wish to comment.

My very best wishes.

Sincerely,

Irv Drasnin
Producer

Professor Paul T.K. Lin, Director
Center for East Asian Studies
McGill University
Montreal 110 Quebec
Canada

March 2, 1972

1514 17th st. nw.
Washington, D.C. 20036
20 February 1972

Irv Drasnin
CBS News
51 W. 52 St.
New York 10019

Dear Mr. Drasnin:

Misunderstanding China was a great show. Its enough to restore one's faith in CBS News. Efforts like tonight's show go a long way toward balancing the image created by indulging in tricks like flying Cronkite & Co. to Paris to get film of what the mainland Chinese delegation to the U.N. looks like. (None of the envoys had horns. I wonder if anyone was surprised.) That sort of thing leads one to conclude that television can show us everything but teach us nothing. Your show disproves that.

I'm doubtly impressed. First there is the message that we know little about China and are filled with misinformation, largely the result of our own efforts. But the point could have been made in many ways and didn't insure the beautiful script that resulted. It was the best I've heard since CBS starred Bill Cosby in a black history series several years ago. I'd begun to think the only one at CBS News who wrote really well was John Hart(or his writer). I was wrong.

But the most encouraging thing involves a bigger issue. Shows like yours give one the impression that someone up there is really thinking about what things mean. Often I'm left wondering whether CBS News is populated entirely by technocrats who think of nothing more than how to come up with yet another exciting chapter in the saga of Howard Hughes. So much of what is presented is beautiful but trivial.

I hope someone at CBS is giving some thought to the general question raised by your show about media performance in reporting international trends. It would be embarassing five years hence to see you produce a show about socialist South America and how few people in the United States realized what was happening down there. Howard Hughes in Managua is worth repeated reports, Salvador Allende in Santiago and the right-wing generals in Brasilia aren't. The British coal strike gets more media coverage in a week than Cuba or Canada receive in a year. We can only hope that what we don't know won't hurt us. History has proven otherwise.

If you ever have a need for someone who writes well, but would like to be as polished as you are, hire me. In the meantime, accept my congratulations. Your show was impressive on several levels. I hope that it marks the start of a new trend and is not a one-shot effort that will be completely overshadowed by the hours of technically beautiful, but intellectually vapid programs that I anticipated being beamed from China in the next week.

If you ever get to Washington, I'd appreciate a chance to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Jim Jaffe

1514 17th st. nw.
Washington 20036

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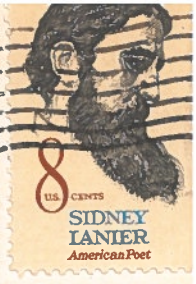

Mr. Irv Drasnin
CBS News
~~51 W. 52~~nd st.
New York, N.Y. 10019

35 W 45

CBS NEWS
A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Dear Mr. Jaffe:

I am most appreciative of your thoughtful letter and of your most generous remarks regarding "Misunderstanding China."

Such considered responses are both gratifying and instructive. You put the problem well: television can show us everything but teach us nothing. The challenge of course is to use the medium so that it does as much of both as is possible.

I would be delighted to meet you some time.

Best regards,

Irv Drasnin
Producer

Mr. Jim Jaffe
1514 17th Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20036

March 1, 1972

From the desk of

ROY HEATLY

KRON-TV 4

2-23-72

Mr. Irv Drasnin
CBS News
524 W. 57th Street
New York, N. Y. 10019

Dear Irv:

Not only I but many of ~~xx~~ my colleagues have expressed admiration for MISUNDERSTANDING CHINA.

Terrence O'Flaherty devoted not one but two columns to your broadcast -- and the attention was well-deserved.

My own personal congratulations to the "produced and written by" creator.

Your friend,

Roy H.

P.S. -- Also to Charles Kuralt; after all, he was a Bureau Chief in LA before I was, after Schakne, ~~xxxxx~~ before Zelman, before Harris, before Crossland, before ....

KRON-TV 4

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Mr. Irv Drasnin
CBS News
~~524 West 57th St.~~
New York, New York 10019

CBS NEWS
A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Dear Roy:

I sincerely appreciate your thoughtful note and your most generous response to "Misunderstanding China."

It would be good to hear from you under any circumstances, but this doubles the pleasure. I don't know Terrence O'Flaherty but this is the second time he has paid attention to one of my documentaries and I'm beginning to think he's a helluva guy! Many thanks for taking the time and trouble to clip and send the columns. I'll pass them on to Charlie, along with your regards.

As a Californian, I'm most envious of your being able to combine the livelihood of your choice with living in San Francisco. I hope all is going well.

All my best,

Irv Drasnin

Mr. Roy Heatly
KRON-TV
San Francisco, California
94119

March 1, 1972

FILM ODYSSEY

Feb 21, 1972

Mr. Irv Drasnin
CBS News

Dear Mr. Drasnin:

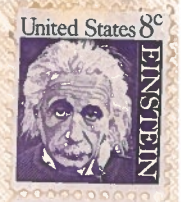
Your program aired on Sunday - Misunderstanding China was a remarkably clear, cogent and exciting use of compilation film material - one of the best pieces of research and of editing to support commentary that I've seen. As Film Consultant for the PBS Film Odyssey series, a special vote of honor to your film researcher - Marion Lear Swaybill - and to the others who worked on this area. Using fiction film, newsreel and actuality footage together to interpret history is a particular fascination of mine - I know how difficult the hassle involved is. In fact, I was kind of playing along with the program, guessing what footage or film you'd use next. And you were always out in front, more intelligent than I expected, or than I was in my fictional picks (and I didn't have to clear mine with studio lawyers.

Congratulations on your professionalism and your energy. It's not often that you see the two combined on television - be it commercial, public or whatever.

Best,

Michael W. Barlow
Consultant
Film Odyssey

BARLOW
KCET-LA
4400 SUNSET DR.
L. A. 90027, CA.



35 W 45

Mr. Irv. Drasnin
Producer · MISUNDERSTANDING CHINA
CBS NEWS
~~51 W. 52 ND~~ ST.
New York, N. Y. 10019

FILM ODYSSEY

CBS NEWS
A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Dear Mr. Barlow:

I am most appreciative of your thoughtful letter and of your most generous remarks regarding "Misunderstanding China." I have passed it on to Mrs. Swaybill and other members of the staff.

Such enthusiasm from persons like yourself is particularly gratifying and that you would take the time to write is doubly gratifying. Such responses make the hassle worth it.

All my best,

Irv Drasnin
Producer

Mr. Michael W. Barlow
Film Odyssey
KCET-L.A.
4400 Sunset Drive
Los Angeles, California 90027

March 1, 1972